

The administration's sound proposals for the U.S. intelligence apparatus

Major changes in the structure of the government's intelligence apparatus reportedly being perfected by the Kennedy administration in the wake of the Cuban invasion fiasco seem to us to make very good sense.

The most important alterations being planned are these:

- Eliminate the Central Intelligence Agency's present function as top evaluator of all intelligence collected by various government agencies. This work would be centered in a new office, independent of all collecting agencies and responsible directly to the President.

- Consolidate the now separate and often rival intelligence operations of the military services into a single Defense Intelligence Agency directly under the Secretary of Defense. This already has been announced officially.

- Remove from the CIA responsibility for large-scale covert operations like the Cuban affair. Such projects would become the province of the Defense Department.

Since the Korean war, the CIA has mushroomed into the king-sized component of the over-all intelligence structure. As such, it not only collects and evaluates its own intelligence, but also evaluates that collected by the armed services, the State Department, the FBI, the Atomic Energy Commission, and so on. The assembled and interpreted results then are passed along to the President and the National Security Council by

CIA Director Allen W. Dulles, and become the basis for formulating official government policy.

The danger here is, as anyone who ever has engaged in such work knows, that the CIA is likely to favor its own estimates over those of other agencies and consequently come up with faulty or distorted results. This is precisely what happened in the case of Cuba. An independent, evaluator, with no vested interest in the intelligence secured by any particular agency, should be able to make sounder and more hard-headed judgments.



'Central Intelligence says not to worry . . . we can count on the loyalty of the American colonies.'

—Fisher, in the Saturday Review

Much the same considerations motivated consolidation of the armed services' several intelligence branches. Too frequently, the estimates of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force have been warped by and used to serve the often conflicting interests of each service. The independent Defense Intelligence Agency, it is hoped, will be much freer of such parochialism.

Operational control of covert propaganda, political and military ventures does not fit well with straight intelligence work. This was proved during World War II, when the Office of Strategic Services tried to handle everything from safe-cracking in enemy embassies, through "black" propaganda manufacture, to actual guerrilla warfare. The resulting welter of duplication and cross-purpose work had to be experienced to be believed.

The United States is a relative newcomer to the weird and complex game of intelligence and subversion. It is not especially surprising, therefore, that our "departments of dirty tricks" like the OSS and the CIA have had their troubles. But the times are far too parlous and the responsibility of the United States on the world stage is far too great to settle for anything but the very best obtainable intelligence apparatus. President Kennedy and his New Frontiersmen learned this the hard way in Cuba. Now they are setting about reorganizing the machinery in business like and intelligent fashion.